

Hunting and Trapping Emergency Order

Under the Authority of AS 16.05.060

Alaska Department
of Fish and Game

Emergency Order No. 02-01-17

Issued at: Anchorage, Alaska
June 6, 2017

Effective Date: 12:01 AM
July 1, 2017

Expiration Date: June 30, 2018
at 11:59 p.m. unless superseded
by subsequent emergency order

EXPLANATION:

In spring 1992, the Alaska Board of Game adopted a lynx tracking harvest strategy in Southcentral game management units with framework trapping seasons of November 10 through the last day of February. The board delegated authority to the department to adjust season dates within this framework to track population cycles. In March 2005, the board determined lynx hunting seasons, but not bag limits, would be included as part of the lynx tracking harvest strategy. In March 2009, the board eliminated the tracking strategy in Unit 6 and established a permanent hunting and trapping season of November 10 through the last day of February.

This emergency order meets the lynx management needs for 2017–2018 by adjusting lynx hunting and trapping seasons for the Region II units managed under the lynx tracking harvest strategy.

Based on information collected during the past season, the lynx trapping season will remain closed on the Kenai Peninsula (Units 7 and 15) and in the Anchorage Area (Unit 14C). The lynx hunting season will be open from January 1, through February 15 in Units 7 and 15, but remains closed in Unit 14C.

Therefore, the following regulations in **5 AAC 85.060(4), Hunting seasons and bag limits for fur animals** and **5 AAC 84.270(5), Furbearer trapping**, are superseded by this emergency order, and the following provisions are effective for lynx hunting and trapping:

Unit	Open Season	Bag limit
5 AAC 85.060(4), Hunting seasons and bag limits for fur animals		

(4) Lynx

Units 7 and 15	Jan. 1- Feb. 15
Unit 14C	No open season

5AAC 84.270(5), Furbearer trapping

(5) Lynx

Units 7 and 15	No open season
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Unit 14C	No open season
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All other lynx hunting and trapping regulations remain unchanged and are not affected by this emergency order.

Sam Cotten
Commissioner

By delegation to: 

Cynthia Wardlow
Management Coordinator

JUSTIFICATION:

Units 7 and 15: Kenai Peninsula

Observations and track counts indicate snowshoe hare populations have declined on the Kenai Peninsula. Hare and lynx populations in these areas were previously very high and probably peaked during the winter of 2011-2012. The 2011-12 lynx harvest was a record high take of 456 with approximately 27 percent kittens and the 2012-13 harvest was almost as high with 433 lynx taken. As expected, the 2013-14 harvest was low with only 118 reported and 20 percent kittens. Both hunting and trapping seasons were closed during the 2014-15 regulatory year. As a measure of evaluation a limited hunting season was allowed on the Kenai Peninsula for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons, with six lynx taken in RY15 and 7 lynx taken in RY16. We expect kitten production and survival to continue declining and remain low as the population moves through the next cyclic low. Therefore, the lynx trapping seasons will remain closed and likely not reopen until a cyclic upturn occurs.

Units 14C Anchorage and Chugach State Park

Observations by department staff and trappers indicate snowshoe hare and lynx populations are patchy. Snowshoe hare populations peaked throughout most of Unit 14C around 2000 to 2001 and again in 2011-2012. Lynx populations have followed similar patterns. Only six lynx were harvested in 2013-2014 and all were adults. Lynx season was closed to both hunting and trapping during RY14, RY15, and RY16 due to low population estimates. Hunting and trapping seasons for lynx will remain closed and likely not reopen until a cyclic upturn occurs.

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